

Virginia Department of Education
Division of Teacher Education, Licensure, and Professional Practice
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT CHANGES

Introduction: Applicants requesting initial teaching licensure in Virginia are required to achieve passing scores on professional teacher's assessments prescribed by the Board of Education unless exemption on the basis of prior teaching experience is applicable. Applicants seeking the Technical Professional License or Pupil Personnel Services License are not required to complete the professional teacher's assessment. Individuals who have completed a minimum of two years of full-time, successful teaching experience in an accredited public or nonpublic schools (K-12) in a state other than Virginia are exempted from the assessment requirement. Complete information regarding assessments can be found on the Department of Education Web site at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/newvdoe/praxis.pdf>.

Effective January 1, 2006, Praxis I will no longer be used as the academic skills assessment for licensure. However, Praxis I will continue to be the prescribed assessment for entry into a Virginia approved teacher preparation program.

Required Licensure Assessments

The prescribed tests for Virginia for initial licensure effective January 1, 2006, are as follows:

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| 1. ACADEMIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT: | Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment |
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PLEASE NOTE: Individuals whose applications for initial licenses and passing scores for Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) are received in the Office of Licensure, Department of Education, on or before December 31, 2006, will not be required to take and pass the VCLA. During this period of time, applicants may submit Praxis I or the VCLA to satisfy the academic skills assessment. All other tests (Praxis II and VRA, if applicable) will be required.

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| 2. CONTENT ASSESSMENT: | Praxis II |
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- 3. VIRGINIA READING ASSESSMENT (if applicable):** This test is required for individuals seeking an endorsement as a reading specialist or individuals seeking initial licensure with endorsements in any of the following endorsements (teaching areas): Early/Primary preK-3, Elementary Education PreK-6, Special Education-Emotional Disturbances, Special Education-Specific Learning Disabilities, Special Education-Mental Retardation, Special Education-Hearing Impairments, Special Education-Visual Impairments.

Introducing the VIRGINIA Communication and Literacy Assessment™

Web Site: <http://www.vcla.nesinc.com/>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION

1. When will the *Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment*™ (VCLA) be required for licensure?

Response: The VCLA will be required for all teachers applying for initial licensure beginning January 1, 2006.

2. Are there exceptions to the January 1, 2006, implementation date of the VCLA?

Response: Yes. Individuals who meet the out-of-state experience exemption requirement or individuals who graduate from Virginia approved programs **prior to December 31, 2006**, and who have taken and passed the Praxis I (ACT or SAT); Praxis II; and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), if applicable, will not be required to take and pass the *Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment*™ (VCLA).

Individuals whose applications for initial licenses and passing scores for Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) are received in the Office of Licensure, Department of Education, on or before December 31, 2006, will not be required to take and pass the VCLA. All other tests (Praxis II and VRA, if applicable) will be required.

3. When was the first administration of the VCLA?

Response: The first administration of the VCLA was January 7, 2006.

4. When will graduates of Virginia approved programs be subject to the VCLA?

Response: Individuals who graduate from Virginia approved programs **prior to December 31, 2006**, and who have taken and passed the Praxis I (ACT or SAT); Praxis II; and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), if applicable, will not be required to take and pass the *Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment*™ (VCLA). Virginia approved program graduates after December 31, 2006, will be subject to the VCLA.

5. **After January 1, 2006, will individuals applying for an initial license who have already taken and passed Praxis I, be required to take and pass the VCLA?**

Response: No, provided that the application for initial license and passing scores for Praxis I (ACT or SAT) are received in the Office of Licensure, Department of Education, on or before December 31, 2006. Individuals whose applications and for initial Virginia licenses and passing scores for Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics) are received in the Office of Licensure, Department of Education, on or before December 31, 2006, will not be required to take and pass the VCLA. All other testing requirements (Praxis II and the VRA, if applicable) will be required. In addition, those individuals who meet the out-of-state experience exemption or who graduate from Virginia approved programs **prior to December 31, 2006**, and who have taken and passed the Praxis I (ACT or SAT); Praxis II; and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA), if applicable.

6. **If individuals have been issued a provisional license, special education conditional license, or statement of eligibility prior to January 1, 2006, and were advised that they needed to take and pass Praxis I, do they have to take the VCLA?**

Response: No, provided that they meet the Praxis I (ACT or SAT) requirement within the validity period of the license. If the license or statement of eligibility expires, the individual may submit passing scores on Praxis I and other tests required when the license was issued on or before December 31, 2006, or be subject to the tests for licensure (such as VCLA, Praxis II, and VRA) in effect at the time of the request. For example, suppose an individual had a provisional license with an endorsement in elementary education prek-6 effective July 1, 1997, to June 30, 2000, that expired due to not meeting the Praxis I requirement. If that individual now decides to seek a license, he or she must submit passing scores on the tests required when the license was issued on or before December 31, 2006, or the individual will be required to pass the VCLA as well the Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge assessment and the Virginia Reading Assessment (VRA).

7. **If individuals were issued a license prior to January 1, 2006, and were advised that they needed to take and pass Praxis I, can they take and pass either Praxis I (SAT or ACT substitute tests) or the VCLA?**

Response: Yes.

8. **If individuals are issued a license after January 1, 2006, and are advised that they need to take and pass the VCLA, can they substitute Praxis I instead?**

Response: Yes, only if the passing scores for Praxis I are submitted on or before December 31, 2006. After December 31, 2006, Praxis I will **not** be accepted.

9. **Must colleges continue to provide Praxis I test scores for graduates of Virginia approved programs as part of the application for licensure after December 31, 2006?**

Response: No.

10. **Can individuals take and pass Praxis I Reading and Writing in lieu of the VCLA?**

Response: No. The Board of Education has not approved Praxis I as a substitute for the VCLA.

11. Will the SAT or ACT be approved as substitute tests for the VCLA?

Response: No. The Board of Education has not approved substitute tests for the VCLA.

12. What is the format of the VCLA?

Response: The VCLA is composed of two subtests—reading and writing. Each of these subtests is scored separately.

13. Will the Board of Education approve a composite score of the two subtests?

Response: The Board of Education is responsible for setting the qualifying scores for all professional teacher assessments; therefore, the board will make this decision at the time the scores are set.

14. Will individuals who have completed a minimum of two years of full-time, successful teaching experience in an accredited public or nonpublic school (kindergarten through grade 12) in a state other than Virginia be exempted from the VCLA?

Response: Yes. However, if approved, proposed *Regulations Governing the Licensure of School Personnel* will change out-of-state exemption criteria as follows: Individuals who hold a valid out-of-state license (full credential with no deficiencies) and who have completed a minimum of three years of full-time, successful teaching experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school (kindergarten through grade 12) in a state other than Virginia are exempted from the professional teacher's assessment requirements.

15. Will there be any extensions on special education conditional licenses or provisional licenses for individuals to meet testing requirements?

Response: No.

FINAL NOTE: There are proposed revisions to the *Regulations Governing the Licensure of School Personnel*, including changes in the experience exemption criteria and the timetable for completing testing requirements under a provisional license. Continue to monitor the assessment page at the Department of Education Web site for the most up-to-date assessment information: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/newvdoe/praxis.pdf> .